
LEGENDS IN UROLOGY

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I was greatly honored and humbled by a request to contribute to The Canadian Journal of Urology's "Legends in Urology" series. It is interesting to look back at the notable events that have molded my career.

I was born in a small village near Bombay, India. I was the oldest of six children and I attended a missionary high school run by the Church of Scotland. My family lived in a small apartment in Bombay where sometimes we had little food. My parents constantly instilled in us that the path to stability and success was through higher education, unequivocal faith, determination, discipline, and perseverance. I received a scholarship to attend medical school at Bombay University, and after graduating, I planned to become a surgeon. However, I needed to "earn and learn" to help my father support the education of my siblings. I became part of the first group of physicians from India who went to the United States for post-graduate training in 1960. After a 32-hour journey, I arrived at Deaconess Hospital in Buffalo, New York at 11:30 at night with eight dollars in my pocket, not knowing a soul. I spent that first night sleeping on a hard, wooden EKG table, since all the hospital beds were taken. My earlier training to obtain the equivalent to an Eagle Scout medal served me well, however, and I was able to weather such adversities in the early stages of my career.

After completing my residency and board certification in general surgery, I joined Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York, to sub-specialize in surgical oncology. My first rotation was in urology, under the chair of urology, Dr. Marvin Woodruff, who had trained under the esteemed Dr. Reed Nesbit. Dr. Woodruff asked me to become the first urology resident in the new joint residency program at Roswell Park and Cleveland Clinic in Ohio, which he led along with Drs. Ralph Straffon and Bruce Steward. I trained at Cleveland Clinic in hemodialysis and kidney transplantation, under Dr. Willem Kolff, the father of hemodialysis. Subsequently, I became an attending urologist at Roswell, working in urology, dialysis, and kidney transplantation. In 1968, serum prostate-specific antigen was discovered by Dr. Wang at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute laboratories, and I, along with Drs. Murphy and Woodruff performed the initial clinical trial with over 3,000 patients. I joined Dr. Gambacorta in private practice in 1974 and continued as part-time attending urologist at Roswell. I became president of the Buffalo Urological Society in 1982. In 1983, I was appointed to the board of the New York State Urological Society, and in 1990 I became president of that society. Along with Dr. Bill Tozzo from New York and Dr. Tony Passaretti from Albany, I arranged urology educational seminars, which brought me into contact with many other prominent urologists.

The American Association of Clinical Urologists (AACU) was then in its infancy, with founding members Dr. Tozzo and Dr. Passaretti. I succeeded Dr. Passaretti as the Northeastern Section representative and then became the president of the AACU in 1999-2000. I was also chair of the Legislation Committee and AACU historian. During this time, the Urology Political Action Committee (UROPAC) was established, with chair, Dr. Tozzo. I succeeded Dr. Tozzo as UROPAC treasurer and chair. UROPAC funds enable us to contribute to the election campaigns of legislators who support urology. This access to legislators has also helped AACU and AUA staff inform lawmakers about issues surrounding urotrauma and prostate cancer legislation.

In 1989 the Northeastern Section of the AUA (NSAUA), which includes most of Canada, was on the verge of bankruptcy. I was a member of the Canadian Urological Association (CUA), as I still am. Dr. Jack Sales from Ontario, Dr. Normand Sullivan from Quebec (both CUA past presidents), and Dr. Tony Passaretti (all NS AUA past presidents) decided to raise funds to keep the section solvent. I was asked to join their Development Committee. By 1992, the committee

had raised \$3.2 million for the NS AUA and an additional \$1.6 million for its foundation. This was the first section of the AUA to give scholarships, starting in 1998. To date, twenty scholarships have been awarded to the section's best young urologists to further their research, education, and academic careers. Largely as a result of this work, I received the NS AUA Distinguished Service Award in 1999, one of only eight urologists so honored. As we all know, today's research is tomorrow's practice!

From 1972 to 2009, I served as the chair of urology of both Sisters of Charity Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital of the Western New York Catholic Health System. In 1976, I was appointed clinical assistant professor of urology at the State University of New York at Buffalo, School of Medicine (SUNY) by the late Dr. Staubitz. I became adjunct clinical associate professor of surgery at the New York College of Osteopathic Medicine and New York Institute of Technology in 2000. From 2000 to 2009, I also served as a board member of the Western New York Catholic Health System and in March of this year, they honored me with the "Man of the Year" award. In 2000, I was awarded the prestigious Dr. G. M. Phadke Memorial Oration Award by the Urological Association of India in Hyderabad, India and the National Asian American Physician Association presented me with the Distinguished Service Award. I am a member of several national and international associations. I am an honorary life member not only of the AUA, but also of the Urology Societies of Brazil, India, and Mexico. I was a visiting professor in Brazil, India, Mexico, Poland, and Hungary. Thanks to the long standing friendly relationship, astute diplomacy, and mutual trust between Dr. Gabriel Haas and the urology leadership in Hungary and Poland, I managed to bring both countries within the AUA as international members. I am a member of 21 organizations and have served on 15 medical boards and 91 committees. I have authored more than 136 journal articles and book chapters, and I was listed in several "Who's Who" lists.

In 2005, I was elected as the NS AUA representative on the board of the AUA and have been very active on many committees including serving on the Clinical Guidelines Committee for 12 years under the late Dr. Joseph Segura, chair of urology at the Mayo Clinic. In 2009, Drs. Sales, Passaretti, and Sullivan (all past presidents of the NS AUA) nominated me for president of the AUA. I was president-elect in 2009 and became president of the AUA in 2010. During my tenure, the AUA set and accomplished several goals: 1) Expand and enhance the AUA's clinical guidelines program; 2) Reposition and enhance the AUA's office of education; 3) Grow and expand the AUA's foundation; 4) Strengthen and expand AUA relationships and interactions with sections; 5) Advance international education and key relationships. I enthusiastically promoted many areas of urology as well as the highest standards of clinical urological care. The significant and newly developed areas of urological care included: 1) Pelvic reconstructive surgery (male and female); 2) Male health; 3) Core Curriculum; 4) Global Philanthropy; 5) Urologic team approach through education of nurse practitioners and physician assistants to circumvent the existing shortage of urologists.

While the strength of the AUA lies in the autonomy and cultural integrity of each AUA section, as the parent organization, it focuses on common goals of improving educational, research, and scientific activities along with public education. Presently, we are successfully collaborating with urologists in China, India, Japan, Brazil and Mexico, and we plan to advance urologic education throughout the world. The AUA has also expanded its role to include educating primary care physicians about common urologic problems. Challenges facing us in the third millennium will require vision, determination and commitment. We all live under the same sky, but we do not see the same horizon. The difference of perspective affects us all.

Throughout my life I have followed the motto "Ask not what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country," as stated by the late President John F. Kennedy. A defining moment of my AUA presidency was my trip this year to the US Army Headquarters in South Carolina to bestow AUA's highest award, "Honorary Member of AUA," to General William Fox, an Iraq war veteran. Two years ago, General Fox sustained injuries from an improvised explosive device while he was returning from inspecting a children's cancer hospital being constructed in Basra, Iraq. Despite a complicated recovery, he has continued to serve his countrymen. I extol him as well as all members of our armed forces.

I have always believed that success of the AUA lies in three words – adapt, adopt, and adept. As we move forward, I urge urologists to be informed, involved, and invested in their profession.

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